

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 156

June 8, 1999, 3:46 p.m.
Page S-6669 Temp. Record

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS/Alternative Budget Authority Reductions

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000 . . . S. 1122. McCain amendment No. 584.

ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 16-81

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1122, the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000, will provide \$264.7 billion in new budget authority for the military functions of the Department of Defense, which is \$1.427 billion more than requested, \$6.594 billion more than provided last year (counting the supplemental amounts provided in May, 1999), and \$14.116 billion more than enacted in last year's defense appropriations bill. This \$264.7 billion does not include an additional \$5 billion (\$1.8 billion for fiscal year 2000 pay and pensions and \$3.1 billion for fiscal year 1999 readiness accounts) in previously approved emergency budget authority that will be available in fiscal year 2000. Initially, the bill had \$267.8 billion in new budget authority; that amount was reduced in section 3108 by \$3.1 billion so that budget authority on other appropriations bills could be increased without exceeding the caps. To stay within the committee allocation of \$263.9 billion for defense spending, certain spectrum sales will be accelerated to get offsets of approximately \$2 billion.

The McCain amendment would strike section 3108 of the bill. That section will reduce budget authority in the bill by \$3.1 billion (without that section, the total budget authority in the bill would be \$267.8 billion). More specifically, that section will reduce procurement funding by \$400 million with the intention of reducing funds for cruise missile replacement, and it will reduce operation and maintenance funding by \$2.7 billion. In place of those cuts, the McCain amendment would reduce funding in other parts of the bill by \$3.1 billion, with the intention being that those cuts would come out of the approximately \$5 billion in budget authority that will be provided by the bill for unrequested items. The amendment would not affect total funding on this bill or other appropriations bills.

Those favoring the amendment contended:

(See other side)

YEAS (16)		NAYS (81)				NOT VOTING (3)	
Republicans (8 or 15%)	Democrats (8 or 18%)	Republicans (45 or 85%)		Democrats (36 or 82%)		Republicans (2)	Democrats (1)
Allard	Bayh	Abraham	Inhofe	Akaka	Kennedy	Crapo- ²	Biden- ⁴
Brownback	Edwards	Ashcroft	Jeffords	Baucus	Kerrey	Gregg- ²	
Gramm	Feingold	Bennett	Lott	Bingaman	Kohl		
Grams	Graham	Bond	Mack	Boxer	Landrieu		
Hagel	Kerry	Bunning	McConnell	Breaux	Lautenberg		
Kyl	Robb	Burns	Murkowski	Bryan	Leahy		
Lugar	Torricelli	Campbell	Nickles	Byrd	Levin		
McCain	Wellstone	Chafee	Roberts	Cleland	Lieberman		
		Cochran	Roth	Conrad	Lincoln		
		Collins	Santorum	Daschle	Mikulski		
		Coverdell	Sessions	Dodd	Moynihan		
		Craig	Shelby	Dorgan	Murray		
		DeWine	Smith, Bob	Durbin	Reed		
		Domenici	Smith, Gordon	Feinstein	Reid		
		Enzi	Snowe	Harkin	Rockefeller		
		Fitzgerald	Specter	Hollings	Sarbanes		
		Frist	Stevens	Inouye	Schumer		
		Gorton	Thomas	Johnson	Wyden		
		Grassley	Thompson				
		Hatch	Thurmond				
		Helms	Voinovich				
		Hutchinson	Warner				
		Hutchison					

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

Appropriators, when putting together this bill, made a decision to reduce by \$3.1 billion the total amount of budget authority that they originally had planned to spend on defense. They made that decision in order to have more budget authority under the cap available for other appropriations bills. Even after that cut, this bill will provide a substantial increase in defense spending, plus an extra \$5 billion will be available in fiscal year 2000 for defense from the supplemental we just passed, and other appropriations bills are going to have significant cuts this year. Therefore, we think that the reduction made by appropriators was reasonable.

However, we do not agree with where they made their reduction. The \$3.1 billion cut will come out of the most critically underfunded defense accounts--procurement and operation and maintenance. Instead of cutting the money from where it is needed, it should be cut out of the \$5 billion in fat that has been added to this bill. Members have shoved hundreds of little special interest, pork-barrel items into this appropriations bill. For instance, this bill will demand that the Defense Department fund specific laser research projects at specific labs all over the country; it will demand funding for osteoporosis research; it will demand money to combat the brown tree snake in Guam and Hawaii; it will demand money for phyto-remediation research.

We do not doubt that many of these projects are worthwhile, but they are not the military's highest priorities. It is much more important for the Defense Department to be able to increase spending on procurement, on spare parts, on training, on pay, and on efforts to improve the quality of life for service members. Our military's readiness has been seriously degraded in recent years, and our top priority should be to repair the damage, not to pay for pork-barrel projects that benefit very narrow special interests in our States. A few facts should help to illustrate the extent of our current problems: the Navy has only one-half the number of F/A-18 pilots, one-third of the S-3 pilots, and one-fourth of the EA-6B pilots it needs; only 26 percent of Air Force pilots have committed to stay beyond their current service agreement; the current war in Yugoslavia is being fought using 40-year-old B-52s that will not be retired until 2037; the Navy is struggling to maintain a fleet of 300 ships on a budget that is not even sufficient to maintain 200 ships (at the start of this decade we had a well-maintained, 500-ship Navy); the Marine Corps has to retread its light trucks and Humvees in order to be able to afford small arms ammunition for its forward deployed Marines; and 11,000 service personnel are paid so poorly they are on food stamps.

Our defense forces are under-trained, under-equipped, under-paid, and over-deployed. They have many very urgent needs, and those very urgent needs do not include mandates for the Defense Department to spend billions of dollars on low-priority, unrequested projects. The McCain amendment gives Senators a very clear choice. They can vote to cut \$3.1 billion out of operation and maintenance accounts and out of procurement accounts, or they can vote to cut \$3.1 billion out of the \$5 billion in special interest items that have been shoved into this bill by Members. We vote for the latter.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

It is rather interesting how people can be presented with the same set of facts and, in good faith, come up with almost totally opposite conclusions. We will start with the claim that this bill will cut funds for operation and maintenance and for procurement. The Appropriations Committee started with an amount for operations and maintenance that was significantly greater than the amount given in the previous year. The Senate, just a couple of weeks ago, then passed a supplemental appropriations bill that will provide \$3.1 billion more for operations and maintenance, and though that money is for fiscal year 1999, it effectively will be for fiscal year 2000 because that is when it will be spent. After that bill passed, the Appropriations Committee initially planned on keeping the operations and maintenance funding level it had planned on before getting that \$3.1 billion, but it later decided to reduce the operations and maintenance account by \$3.1 billion in order to free up budget authority for other appropriations bills. Thus, the reality is not that operations and maintenance funding is going to be "cut"; instead, it is going to be increased by the originally planned amount instead of that originally planned amount plus \$3.1 billion.

The other disagreement we have with our colleagues is over their characterization of the \$5 billion in funding in this bill that was not requested. We note, first, that the budget request comes from the Administration, not the Pentagon. The Pentagon may have its preferences, but the Administration says what it may or may not, and must or must not, request. Do our colleagues really suppose, for instance, that the Pentagon wished to be limited to the total inadequate amount that "it" requested? That point aside, we were not elected to be rubber-stamps for either the Pentagon or the Administration or for any other Federal Department or agency for that matter. We have our defense priorities and we have an obligation to act on them. For instance, every year we are fully justified in increasing funding for the Guard and Reserves. That funding has to be provided because the Defense Department is biased against reserve forces and consequently will never request adequate funding. A third point that needs to be made is that we know that a large percentage of these projects our colleagues derisively label "pork barrel" are strongly supported by the Defense Department.

The \$5 billion in funding for specific projects that is in this bill is \$5 billion that we have been planning on spending all along. The emergency supplemental did not add any funding for such projects. Our colleagues are asking us to discard our priorities by slashing this specific project funding in order to increase spending even more on procurement and operation and maintenance accounts. We will not. We urge the rejection of this amendment.